

## MINUTES

COUNCIL ON RECYCLING  
JULY 26, 2004  
COUNTY BOARD ROOM  
311 MINER AVE., EAST  
LADYSMITH, WISCONSIN

**Council Members Present:** Jeff Fielkow; Neil Peters-Michaud (by teleconference); John Piotrowski; John Reindl; Cecelia Stencil; William Swift; Charlotte Zieve.

**Council Members Absent:** None

**Also attending:** Tony Driessen, American Plastics Council (APC); Terry Mesch, Pepin County Recycling Coordinator.

**Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair John Reindl at 9:00 AM

### **Introduction and Announcements:**

**Minutes:** Approval of the Minutes of May 18, 2004, as amended by the following: Page 1, Reports, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, 6<sup>th</sup> line replace 'under' with 'over'; Page 4, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, line 4 add 'pounds' after '185,000'. Moved by John Piotrowski, seconded by Charlotte Zieve. The minutes were approved as amended.

### **Reports**

**Chair:** Reindl said that Waste News had three articles on issues the Council is following. 1) HP is collecting computers, 2) paper recyclers are losing ground to paper shredding companies and 3) Kellogg got a lot of bad publicity because they included a toy in some of their cereals that had a very small amount of mercury in it. He said that Waste News reported that Dell also has a computer collection program as well. Cecelia Stencil said that in Ladysmith they are collecting cell phones for charities.

Jeff Fielkow said that the City of Madison has passed a resolution authorizing the city to switch to single stream recycling (all recyclables in one bag/cart and separated at the MRF) next year. He said that Madison is the first major program in Wisconsin to go to single stream. He said it will be a mechanized system. Fielkow expects much of SE Wisconsin to follow suit. Neil Peters-Michaud said this will have a huge impact on basics of recycling. Reindl agreed, saying the state is interested in recycling efficiencies. The argument is that this will increase the recycling rate. Fielkow agreed, saying that every study he has seen shows an increase in participation rates, some up to 20%. If done correctly, it can make a significant difference. Reindl said that it makes mixed paper recycling so much easier. Reindl said that this system produces more paper but there is a question about quality. This is one of the issues that John Piotrowski's committee will be discussing. Members decided to revise the agenda and discuss this issue.

Fielkow said that the Council should tour either the Gray's Lake, Ill. or Minneapolis facility. Reindl said that, since both sites are out of state, it may be difficult to arrange. Reindl said he would talk to the DNR Waste Program about budget issues. Stencil suggested that we meet in Beloit and drive to Gray's Lake.

Piotrowski said that he surveyed 6 paper companies, 3 large and 3 small, about issues facing the paper industry. All 6 individuals indicated that it is a global market with 3 primary types of paper: printing/writing paper, tissue papers and containerboard. It is harder to recycle then before because of a higher contaminant level due to specialty inks and glues. It is increasingly difficult and increasingly expensive. All six surveyed said that the increased co-mingling of waste stream is a more significant barrier to efficient, competitive recycling. From an industry standpoint, separating at the point of generation is the best way to improve the overall quality of the waste stream and the value of the waste stream. One quote "To separate paper streams at curbside and

then to dump them all together is silly. Co-mingling recycling is perhaps the single most significant anti-recycling practice out there." This attitude was universally shared.

Pressure sensitive adhesives are loved by the public and hated by the recycling industry. They are convenient for the public but a problem for making new paper. The new adhesives have the same specific gravity as water and therefore cannot be separated out. The material builds up and gums up the system. Tissue machines are particularly intolerant of stickies (adhesives). Companies are returning to virgin material because of the cost of eliminating the stickies. The US Forest Products Laboratory is working with pressure sensitive adhesives manufacturers to increase the recyclability of the material. The American public wants both recycled paper and high brightness. That is difficult to achieve. Unless the consumers will accept less brightness or more spotting, they will not get recycled paper. The public must be reeducated in what can be achieved by recycling and decide if they will accept less bright paper.

Another issue is plant siting. It is very difficult to site a mill near the urban forest to achieve economies. The NIMBY factor is significant. Other comments included: "Keep junk mail separate from newsprint." "Recycled container board is deteriorating due to foreign influence. Fiber board coming in from Asia and South America does not use wood fiber and therefore they have more rejects." Piotrowski distributed a sheet with costs for different grades of paper (attached). Due to costs, there may not be any plants in the US in a few years. Peters-Michaud asked if the companies had expressed their concerns to their suppliers. Piotrowski said he did not ask that question but he will. Reindl said that communities may not know about these problems. Fielkow said that processors know the guidelines and quality standards. Recyclers know the specs. He agreed that stickies were a huge issue. He said that paper mills were continually upgrading their equipment and can now do more with lower quality. That is why mixed paper prices continue to improve. The paper is moving and recyclers are meeting the specs.

Zieve asked about the volatility of the markets. Piotrowski said that it had been very volatile but it has been relatively stable for some time. Because of China's influence, the price has risen rather steadily. It is a commodity so there will always be fluctuation.

Piotrowski said that he would explore whether or not the mills are talking to their suppliers. Mesch said that his area has too little tonnage to be a player. He suggested that groups such as SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America), WCSWMA (Wisconsin County Solid Waste Management Association) and AROW (Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin) be contacted. Mesch worried that with single stream people would start to consider it all garbage. Reindl said this is a major issue and the Council will tour and get people involved.

**DNR:** Dan Fields said the NR 600 series rule package was progressing. The Waste program will ask the NR Board to OK rules hearings at their September Board meeting. The hearings should be in October/November. DNR hopes to have the rules package ready by March of next year. The areas of controversy include the 'compliance assurance plan'. The plan is meant to be a minimal requirement for RU's to show how they would follow up on compliance issues. Some see it as a bigger issue. Another issue is the requirement that haulers must notify their customers of the recycling requirement and another is simplifying the self-certification process to allow single-stream to become an option. Right now every RU would have to ask for an exemption to become a single-stream program.

The DNR is also working on special events recycling with our partners. Groups include the South East Waste Reduction Coalition and the Grass Roots Recycling Network. Events include the Harley 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Wisconsin State Fair and the PGA Tournament at Whistling Straits.

The paid part of the 'Recycling Away From Home' radio campaign has ended. We have sent out the ads to several RU's and they are working with their local radio stations to get airtime. We also have an Op/Ed piece that went out through the Wisconsin Newspaper Association on this topic.

We are working with the Department of Administration to make sure that the state is recycling.

Peters-Michaud said he had been involved with a Waste Management Focus Group on reevaluating the bureau. He said it was very interesting and helpful. Peters-Michaud said he would send information about the meeting to the Council members. Piotrowski said that he was also on

the focus group. He said one of the major issues was that people in the field were very sensitive to the concerns of the companies but the process bogged when it got to Madison. A big theme was that the DNR should focus on bad actors, not on companies simply because they are big. Another issue was that there are high transaction costs in getting things done. There should be more cooperative agreements in the future. Reindl said that he would ask Moore to give an update at the next meeting

**Used Oil Filters and Absorbents**- Swift said that the committee has met and has compiled numbers and background. Those figures include how many filters are used in the state and how many are recycled. Getting the numbers for absorbents is more difficult. He thought there had been a lot of progress. Fields agreed saying that they should have some type of agreement by the end of the year.

**Committee of the Whole on Electronics**: Zieve referred to the proposal (attached). She said that national legislation makes the most sense. It is a waste of time and effort to do this state by state. Therefore #1) to encourage Congress to make this national. #2) we will discuss design for recycling issues later. #3) that the detailed requirements be replaced with a Third Party Organization (TPO) that would be responsible for setting up the system. #4) Support a requirement that manufacturers provide funding for state oversight of the program. #5) intensive and extensive educational programs. Peters-Michaud suggested that we change #3 & #5 to make it clear that we think it should be the manufacturers responsibility to set up the TPO and the manufacturers' responsibility to do the education and not the states or local governments. Fielkow said that there are two levels of outreach. The state would be best at the initial promotion of the new law to increase the awareness of the program and then the manufacturers would do the ongoing outreach. Members agreed. Members wanted some industry representatives in to discuss this proposal. Piotrowski said that he had been in contact with a representative from HP. Peters-Michaud suggested that a representative from the Electronic Industry Alliance (EIA) speak to the Council to give the perspective of the whole industry. Fields said he would pursue that.

Peters-Michaud said that NEPSI was waiting for a response from industry. The industry has been unable to reach consensus so far. Currently it appears that several companies are testing out different approaches. They are doing loss-leader pilots to try different scenarios'. Once the companies have been able to determine the costs, they will be better able to determine their approach. Some, like HP will take back any computer of you buy a new one from them. If you want to just get rid of your computer then you can pay a fee and send it back. Companies say they are losing about \$20 per system.

Reindl said that Rep Miller is running for a new seat and that he is not guaranteed to return next year. Reindl is not sure who would champion this issue if Rep Miller is not elected.

Reindl said that he has a problem with issue #2 as submitted by Bill Tarman-Ramcheck . He does not think manufacturers will want to pay for oversight and pay for their competition, such as Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE). Peters-Michaud agreed, saying he has real problems with the BCE program. He has heard that BCE is behind in collecting electronic again because of volume and partly because of the storm damage in the Waupun area. Philosophically, he objects to the state paying for the program. The state would be better served to use the BCE funding sent to the RU's to contract on their own. Reindl said that if the TPO is established, the BCE program would be redundant. Peters-Michaud said that with a TPO, some of the work for collection and processing would be done locally. The Council should support the most environmentally responsible and efficient means of processing equipment. There should be some minimum qualifications for entry. Piotrowski said he thought the wording was too vague. Phrases such as "environmental risks" and "best possible" are just not quantifiable. For example, is "environmental risk" considered '1 in a million or billion or what?' #3 goes against our view or eliminating detailed, prescriptive language. This is very specific and burdensome. This is very prescriptive. Reindl agreed saying it was prescriptive but loose. There are few definitions. These are good policy statements but not good legislation. These types of goals are not typically put into legislation in the state of Wisconsin. Reindl suggested that Zieve and Piotrowski work with Tarman-Ramcheck to revise this language. Peters-Michaud said that state, through the Department of Administration (DOA), just contracted for computers. The state did not put any end

of life language into the contract. The winner, Insight Corp., did not put any retirement language into their winning bid. This was a missed opportunity by the state. Reindl said we should invite someone from DOA procurement to discuss this issue. Mesch said he was very encouraged by all the industry activity. It shows that the noise created by the states is having an effect. In response to a question on the issue of brominated flame retardants in electronics, Driessen said that he will share any new information on chemicals as it becomes available.

**Other Priority Issues:**

**Construction & Demolition:** Peters-Michaud will chair this committee. AROW and WasteCap have committees on this issue. Fielkow will also be on the committee.

**Mercury in Products:** Fielkow said a tremendous amount of data exists in this area. Data is not the problem. He suggested that the committee get 1) baseline understanding of what mercury is 2) effects on health and the environment 3) how people are exposed 4) what currently is in existence to curtail mercury in products 5) what products have mercury 6) determine what we would like Wisconsin to do. He said the evidence for collecting mercury at the end of life is very convincing. He said that most products are identifiable and the mercury in most products can be reduced or there is a viable alternative to mercury. Reindl said that, for example, the auto industry has taken the mercury switches out of the car. But, the vehicles built before 2004 have mercury switches and, even though the manufacturers put them in, the scrap dealers end up having to take the switches out. He said that GM could have changed the switches 10 years ago for \$.09/switch but did not. Fielkow said we should pursue this because there is a significant health impact as well as the environmental impact. He said the more significant products included fluorescent tubes, batteries, dental amalgam, and electrical switches.

Zieve asked if there were alternatives. Reindl said that for all except fluorescent tubes. In Wisconsin, thermostats and dental amalgam make up the greatest volume. Zieve said there are two issues- new products and previous applications. Fielkow said the research exists. We need to focus on what part of this issue we want to take on. There are new products coming out that include mercury. Reindl said that the mercury thermostat group is not doing well. They are only getting back 2-3% of the thermostats. Thermostats can last 50 years. The real solution is to stop making them. Industry obviously disagrees.

Fielkow said that at the next Council meeting we should decide what we want to focus and create a committee to put the information together, create a 1-2 page summary and state recommendations for possible legislative action. Stencil said the health issue is as important as the environmental aspects. Piotrowski said that we need context. We need to state the benefits and explain the better technologies that make the new materials better. Are we better off now than we were 30 years ago? He'd like to understand the broader scope. Reindl said that most of the mercury is not methyl mercury so it comes out of the body in about 70 days. Peters-Michaud said we need to show how the volume impacts the environment. Reindl said that, according to EPA studies, 48 tons of mercury reaches the air from coal-burning power plants. 50 tons of mercury reach the air from products. If you add land and water together, about 3 times as much mercury comes from products than from power plants. Landfills with bio-reactors may create more mercury emissions. He said that public health groups, AROW, WCSWMA, SWANA and others may want to be part of this effort. Stencil said that many counties have resolutions to ban sales of new products containing mercury in their counties. Fielkow said he would find some people outside the Council who would be interested and convene that group. Any Council member who is interested is invited to join.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Other Business:** The next Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 27, in Kenosha. This will include a tour of the Grayslake, IL..., MRF.

**Adjournment:** Stencil moved and Piotrowski seconded. The Council adjourned at 11:45. Following adjournment, the Council members toured CityForest Corporation. Respectfully submitted by Daniel B. Fields, Department of Natural Resources.